

SHAWN L. HOLLAND,)
)
Plaintiff,)
)
v.) No. 4:09CV1883 DJS
)
UNKNOWN SINGER, et al.,)
)
Defendants.)

This matter is before the Court upon the motion of plaintiff (registration no. 97354), an inmate at the St. Louis City Justice Center, for leave to commence this action without payment of the required filing fee [Doc. #2]. For the reasons stated below, the Court finds that plaintiff does not have sufficient funds to pay the entire filing fee and will assess an initial partial filing fee of \$10.20. See 28 U.S.C. § 1915(b)(1). Furthermore, based upon a review of the complaint, the Court finds that the complaint should be dismissed pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B).

Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915(b)(1), a prisoner bringing a civil action in forma pauperis is required to pay the full amount of the filing fee. If the prisoner has insufficient funds in his or her prison account to pay the entire fee, the Court must assess and, when funds exist, collect an initial partial filing fee of 20 percent of the

greater of (1) the average monthly deposits in the prisoner's account, or (2) the average monthly balance in the prisoner's account for the prior six-month period. After payment of the initial partial filing fee, the prisoner is required to make monthly payments of 20 percent of the preceding month's income credited to the prisoner's account. 28 U.S.C. § 1915(b)(2). The agency having custody of the prisoner will forward these monthly payments to the Clerk of Court each time the amount in the prisoner's account exceeds \$10, until the filing fee is fully paid. Id.

Plaintiff has submitted an affidavit and a certified copy of his prison account statement for the six-month period immediately preceding the submission of his complaint. A review of plaintiff's account indicates an average monthly deposit of \$51.02, and an average monthly balance of \$44.64. Plaintiff has insufficient funds to pay the entire filing fee. Accordingly, the Court will assess an initial partial filing fee of \$10.20, which is 20 percent of plaintiff's average monthly deposit.

28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)

Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B), the Court must dismiss a complaint filed in forma pauperis if the action is frivolous, malicious, fails to state a claim upon which relief can be granted, or seeks monetary relief from a defendant who is immune from such relief. An action is frivolous if it "lacks an arguable basis in either law or fact." Neitzke v. Williams, 490 U.S. 319, 328 (1989). An action is malicious if it is

undertaken for the purpose of harassing the named defendants and not for the purpose of vindicating a cognizable right. Spencer v. Rhodes, 656 F. Supp. 458, 461-63 (E.D.N.C. 1987), aff'd 826 F.2d 1059 (4th Cir. 1987).

To determine whether an action fails to state a claim upon which relief can be granted, the Court must engage in a two-step inquiry. First, the Court must identify the allegations in the complaint that are not entitled to the assumption of truth. Ashcroft v. Iqbal, 129 S. Ct. 1937, 1950-51 (2009). These include “legal conclusions” and “[t]hreadbare recitals of the elements of a cause of action [that are] supported by mere conclusory statements.” Id. at 1949. Second, the Court must determine whether the complaint states a plausible claim for relief. Id. at 1950-51. This is a “context-specific task that requires the reviewing court to draw on its judicial experience and common sense.” Id. at 1950. The plaintiff is required to plead facts that show more than the “mere possibility of misconduct.” Id. The Court must review the factual allegations in the complaint “to determine if they plausibly suggest an entitlement to relief.” Id. at 1951. When faced with alternative explanations for the alleged misconduct, the Court may exercise its judgment in determining whether plaintiff’s conclusion is the most plausible or whether it is more likely that no misconduct occurred. Id. at 1950, 51-52.

The Complaint

Plaintiff brings this action pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1983 alleging violations of his civil rights. Named as defendants are: Unknown Singer (doctor); Correctional Medical Services (“CMS”); and the St. Louis City Justice Center. Plaintiff alleges that in August of 2009 he was involved in shooting and suffered injuries to his left leg. Plaintiff was incarcerated after the shooting and was first given a wheelchair, and then a walker, to use during his time at the St. Louis City Justice Center. Plaintiff complains, generally, about the quality of medical treatment he received at the Justice Center, asserting that he should have been allowed to keep the wheelchair for an extended period of time, and that because the wheelchair was taken away too soon, he fell and suffered injuries to his neck and lower back. Plaintiff does not state whose decision it was to take away the wheelchair and provide him with a walker.

Plaintiff also asserts that after falling, he complained about his pain for several weeks before being allowed an outside medical evaluation at St. Louis University Hospital. Plaintiff acknowledges, however, that in the interim, he was provided with medical care; he simply disagrees with the quality of care given to him during this time period, although he does not make any specific allegations against defendant Singer or any other defendant regarding these assertions.

Plaintiff lastly complains that he disagrees with the treatment he is currently receiving for his leg and believes he should be allowed to seek further outside care with a neurologist at Barnes Hospital. Plaintiff seeks monetary relief for the purported constitutional violations.

Discussion

Although naming CMS as a defendant, plaintiff has not alleged facts showing any action by CMS. Instead, his claims against this corporate defendant appear to rely on the doctrine of respondeat superior. "It is well settled that respondeat superior cannot be the basis of liability in a § 1983 action." Givens v. Jones, 900 F.2d 1229, 1233 (8th Cir.1990).

Likewise, plaintiff has not alleged a policy by CMS that caused or exacerbated his injuries. In Sanders v. Sears Roebuck and Company, 984 F.2d 972 (8th Cir.1993), the court held that a corporation acting under color of state law will be held liable under section 1983 only for its own unconstitutional policies or actions. "The proper test is whether there is a policy, custom or action by those who represent official policy that inflicts injury actionable under § 1983." Id., 984 F.2d at 976. Thus, to state a viable claim against CMS for an injury caused by an unconstitutional policy, plaintiff must allege facts indicating that defendant Singer acted pursuant to an official CMS policy and the official policy is responsible for plaintiff being denied constitutionally adequate

medical care. In this case, plaintiff has not done so. In fact, plaintiff has failed to make any specific allegations against defendant Singer at all. “Liability under § 1983 requires a causal link to, and direct responsibility for, the alleged deprivation of rights.” Madewell v. Roberts, 909 F.2d 1203, 1208 (8th Cir. 1990); see also Martin v. Sargent, 780 F.2d 1334, 1338 (8th Cir. 1985) (claim not cognizable under § 1983 where plaintiff fails to allege defendant was personally involved in or directly responsible for incidents that injured plaintiff). Thus, plaintiff’s complaints against both CMS and defendant Singer fail to state a claim for relief.

Lastly, plaintiff’s claims against the St. Louis City Justice Center fail as a matter of law because the Justice Center is not a suable entity. Ketchum v. City of West Memphis, Ark., 974 F.2d 81, 82 (8th Cir. 1992) (departments or subdivisions of local government are “not juridical entities suable as such.”); Catlett v. Jefferson County, 299 F. Supp. 2d 967, 968-69 (E.D. Mo. 2004).

Accordingly,

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that plaintiff’s motion to proceed in forma pauperis [Doc. #2] is **GRANTED**.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the plaintiff shall pay an initial filing fee of \$10.20 within thirty (30) days of the date of this Order. Plaintiff is instructed to make his remittance payable to “Clerk, United States District Court,” and to include upon it:

(1) his name; (2) his prison registration number; (3) the case number; and (4) that the remittance is for an original proceeding.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Clerk shall not issue process or cause process to issue upon the complaint because the complaint is legally frivolous or fails to state a claim upon which relief can be granted, or both.

An Order of Dismissal will accompany this Memorandum and Order.

Dated this 24th day of November, 2009.

/s/Donald J. Stohr

DONALD J. STOHR

UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE